

Message Text

PAGE 01 ADDIS 14853 252117Z

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NY

COMIDEASTFOR

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 14853

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET SU OAU UN FT

SUBJ: THE SOUTH HEATS UP: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIO-SOMALI
RELATIONS

A. ADDIS 14678 (191426Z DEC 75); B. ADDIS 14722 (221158Z
DEC 75); C. ADDIS 14694 (201121Z DEC 75); D. ADDIS 14695
(201734Z DEC 75); E. ADDIS 14786 (231204Z DEC 75)
F. MOGADISCIO 1793 (220835Z DEC 75); G. ADDIS 14294
(091459Z DEC 75); H. USUN 6681 (090225Z DEC 75);
I. ADDIS 14230 (081501Z DEC 75); J. ADDIS 14066
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 14853 252117Z

(031459Z DEC 75).

1. INTELLIGENCE THUS FAR AVAILABLE TO US ON IDENTITY OF
ELEMENTS NOW ENGAGED IN OGADEN AMBUSHES, MINING INCIDENTS

AND REPORTED INFILTRATIONS FROM SOMALIA INTO BALE, ARUSSI HARAGUE AND SIDAMO, IS CONFUSING. ELEMENTS ARE VARIOUSLY DESCRIBED AS SOMALI SOLDIERS, DISCIPLINED WELL ARMED "MILITARY" WEARING UNIFORMS WITHOUT INSIGNIA; BALE AND/OR OROMO LIBERATION FRONT FIGHTERS; GALLINYA AND/OR SOMALI SPEAKERS USING VERNACULARS NOT NORMALLY FOUND IN ETHIOPIA; ETHIOPIAN IRREGULARS OR (OFFICIALLY BY THE ETHIOPIANS) -- AS BANDITS. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS WILL NO DOUBT HELP US ACHIEVE A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING. FOR THE PRESENT WE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY VIEWS:

A. DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA'S DEEP SOUTH REPORTED INTER ALIA IN REF A-E FOLLOW IN HEELS OF ETHIOPIAN DIPLOMATIC "SUCCESSES" IN OAU AND UN CONTEXTS OVER SOMALIA WITH RESPECT TO TFAI (CF REFS G, H, I, J); RECENTLY INITIATED MANEUVERS OF SOMALI FORCES IN NORTHERN SOMALIA OPPOSITE TFAI WHICH WERE CONDUCTED WITH SUFFICIENT ECLAT TO DRAW ETHIOPIAN MILITARY ATTENTION TO THAT SECTOR; EMERGENCE OF POTENTIAL EDU THREAT IN NW ETHIOPIA; CONTINUING AFAR AND ERITREAN WARFARE; AND, WE ARE TOLD, INCENDIARY BROADCASTS BY HANFERE ALI MIRAH OVER RADIO MOGADISCIO O/A DEC 20.

B. OUTBREAK OF OGADEN AMBUSHES, MININGS AND INFILTRATION BY CAMEL-SUPPLIED ELEMENTS APPEARS INTENTIONALLY DIFFERENTIATED FROM "INVASION" BY GSDR'S MAJOR MILITARY UNITS. NEVERTHELESS, ADMITTEDLY SPOTTY EVIDENCE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE SUGGESTS DEGREE GSDR COOPERATION WITH (REF F) AND QUITE LIKELY STIMULATION OF THESE MARAUDERS AT LEVEL PRESUMABLY CALCULATED NOT TO PROVOKE EXCESSIVE EPMG RESPONSE.

C. IF, AS WE BELIEVE QUITE POSSIBLE, INITIAL REPORTS OF MOVEMENTS SIZABLE NUMBER OF "INFILTRATORS" TOWARDS ARUSSI HARAGUE AND SIDAMO ARE CORRECT, VAST AREA MAY SHORTLY SEE INCIDENTS OF TYPE NOW REPORTED FROM OGADEN AND BALE. INCIDENTS IN THESE AREAS CATCH ETHIOPIANS MILITARILY SHORTHANDED DUE TO HEAVY DEMANDS
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ADDIS 14853 252117Z

UPON ETHIOPIAN FORCES OF ERITREAN WAR AND OTHER ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL INSURGENCIES WLESEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. GSDR OF COURSE WELL AWARE OF RESULTING CONSTRAINTS ON EPMG REACTION-CAPABILITIES IN OGADEN AND THROUGHOUT "DEEP SOUTH."

D. WE NOTE THAT BALE AND SIDAMO WERE THEATER OF ANTI-AMHARA INSURGENCY IN 1968 WHICH WAS PUT DOWN RUTHLESSLY BY THEN IEG. IF CURRENT INCIDENTS SPREAD WE WOULD SPECULATE THAT DIRG MAY NOW LOOK SUFFICIENTLY EMBATTLED TO TEMPT GSDR TO LAUNCH FURTHER ESCALATION. RISK TO GSDR IN HELPING REBELS REKINDLE RACIAL TENSIONS CONCEIVABLY APPEARS ACCEPTABLE IN MOGADISCIO AT PRESENT EVEN IF NEW IN-

SURRECTION FAILS CATCH ON OR PETERS OUT (WOULD WELCOME EMB MOG'S COMMENTS). IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES CALCUALTION MAY BE THAT OPENING YET ANOTHER FRONT -- OGADEN OR WIDER -- WOULD STRETCH ALREADY BADLY OVERTAXED EPMG MILITARY CAPABILITIES EVENFURTHER, WITH ATTENDANT ADVANTAGES SHOULD GSDR OPT TO PURSUE ITS AMBITIONS IN TFAI.

E. ANY SOMALI STIMULATION OF POSSIBLE NEW REBELLION IN ETHIOPIA, MOREOVER, SHOULD NOT BE TOO DIFFICULT TO MASK. OPPOSITION TO AMHARAS AND DIRG CAN ALWAYS BE DEPICTED AS BEING SUFFICIENTLY WIDESPREAD TO PERMIT GSDR WIDE LATITUDE IN ITS HANDLING OF ANY CHARGES WHICH MAY BE LEVELED AGAINST IT BY EPMG IN OAU, UN OR OTHER FORA.

F. OUTBREAK ANY SERIOUS OROMO DISSIDENCE, FINALLY, COULD HAVE DESTABILIZING IMPACT ELSEWHERE IN ETHIOPIA. IT COULD STRAIN AMHARA/GALLA COOPERATION WHICH HAS BEEN CENTRAL TO THE DIRG'S ABILITY TO DATE TO CONTAIN TIGRE DISSIDENCE IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA.

2. VIEWING CURRENT ETHIO-SOMALI STRESSES IN WIDER CONTEXT, QUESTION ARISES AS TO ARAB AND SOVIET ROLES. SOME INFLUENTIAL ARAB DIPLOMATIS HERE HAVE BEEN CHARACTERIZING TFAI DECOLONIZATION AS "ARAB PROBLEM" WHICH ARABS, NOT OAU, WOULD CONTRIVE TO CONTROL. THIS LINE IS DEEPLY DISTURBING TO ETHIOPIANS WHO READ IT AS REFLECTIVE OF ARAB LEAGUE SUPPORT TO LEAGUE-MEMBER SOMALIA AGAINST ETHIOPIA ON TFAI. GIVEN INTRA-ARAB DIFFERENCES, SOMALI AMBITIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ADDIS 14853 252117Z

ETHIOPIAN IMPERATIVES, PRESUMED GREAT POWER INTERESTS AND LOCAL TIRBAL ANTAGONISMS, MOREOVER, ETHIOPIANS LIKELY TO SUSPECT -- AND WE WOULD AGREE -- THAT ARABS IN NO RPT NO POSITION TO "CONTROL" EVENTS ON THE AFRICAN SIDE OF THE BAB-EL-MANDEB. ANY ATTEMPT BY ARABS TO ASSERT THEMSELVES ON TFAI BEYOND RATHER NARROW LIMITS ALSO LIKELY ANTAGONIZE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF OAU-MEMBER STATES. LATTER WOULD WISH TO RESIST SUCH AN EFFORT WHICH THEY WOULD VIEW AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF RENEWED ARAB HEGEMONIAL AMBITIONS ON THIS CONTINENT.

3. SOVIET ROLE, WOULD, OF COURSE, HAVE TO BE RESPONSIBLE TO EVENTS AT LEAST IN PART. EMB MOG MAY WISH TO COMMENT ON MOSCOW'S ABILITY TO CONTROL GSDR ON MATTERS ON WHICH LATTER'S POLITICAL SURVIVAL MIGHT DEPEND. MANNER IN WHICH MOGADISCIO PRESSES SOMALIA'S TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS VIS-A-VIS ETHIOPIA IN TFAI, OGADEN, BALE ETC., IS OF CONCERN TO SOVIETS IN THAT MISCALCULATION COULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES. MAJOR SOMALI EFFORTS TO CHANGE STATUS QUO TO ETHIOPIA'S DISADVANTAGE THROUGH USE OF FORCE (OVERT OR COVERT) CONVERSELY MIGHT THEREFORE ALSO SUGGEST SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED

SOVIET COMMITMENTS IN SUPPORT OF GSDR. TO DATE, SOVIET INTERESTS IN SOMALIA SEEMED FROM HERE TO REQUIRE CONTROLLED STATE OF TENSION BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA. IDEALLY TENSION DESIRED APPEARED TO BE SUFFICIENTLY HIGH TO PERMIT MOSCOW TO TRADE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GSDR FOR FACILITIES AT BERBERA AND ELSEWHERE BUT BELOW THRESHOLD LIKELY TRIGGER MAJOR ETHIO-SOMALI MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN WHICH SOVIETS WOULD BE IN DIFFICULT POSITION. THESE PARAMETERS MAY NOW BE CHANGING, HOWEVER, AS A FUNCTION OF THE RAPIDLY EVOLVING ENVIRONMENT: THE DIRG'S INTERNAL STRESSES; MULTIPLICATION OF DISSIDENCE IN ETHIOPIA COMBINED WITH THE DIRG'S FAILURE THUS FAR TO FIND POLITICAL SOLUTIONS FOR THEM AND ITS RESULTANT OVER-RELIANCE ON FORCE; PARIS' DECISION TO DECOLONIZE TFAI; DEVELOPMENTS IN ANGOLA WHICH -- RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY -- APPEAR TO BE STRENGTHENING THE PERCEPTION IN AFRICA THAT SOVIET POLICY HAS BECOME MORE INTERVENTIONIST WHILE US SUPPORT TO AMERICA'S FRIENDS IS CONSTRAINED BY THE POST-VIETNAM TRAUMA TO A LEVEL INFERIOR TO THAT WHICH THE USSR PRO-
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 ADDIS 14853 252117Z

VIDES ITS CLIENTS.

4. EMBASSIES MOGADISCIO AND MOSCOW MAY WISH TO COMMENT FURTHER ON CURRENT SOMALI AND SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE HORN.
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